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OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

February 15, 2001

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FEB 27 2001

Mr. Michael K. Powell, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am concerned about the future of the ITS spectrum, which is under assault in the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rule Making on 3G spectrum allocations that was released January 5, 2001. The Mississippi EDNET Institute and its ITS spectrum play an important part in Jackson State University's effort to serve the citizens of Mississippi. Moreover, preservation of the full ITS band is absolutely critical if wireless broadband is to become a reality not only in urban areas but also in many rural areas throughout the state of Mississippi.

As you are aware, recent rule changes have opened the ITS spectrum to the implementation of wireless two-way video and broadband data services, including high speed Internet access. The educational power of ITS has been expanded under the digital two-way rules to provide advanced learning services, interactive video, and wireless broadband Internet. As distance learning becomes more robust and interactive, ITS offers educational institutions throughout the country an affordable high-speed on-ramp to the broadband Internet for students and adult learners in the classroom, at home, and at work. This goal was recently cited as the first priority for policymakers by the bipartisan Congressional Web-Based Education Commission. In addition, fixed wireless broadband promises to bring a competitor to D.L. and cable modem technologies to our community, making broadband access not only more widely available but also more affordable.

ITS does not only benefit schools, students, and adult learners. In addition to the broad range of community programming currently carried on ITS spectrum, the recent two-way order has filled a void where legislation and regulation have failed to produce affordable, ubiquitous broadband Internet access for Americans. Working in conjunction with wireless communications companies, ITS spectrum is being used to bring broadband to undeserved populations in rural urban, and otherwise isolated communities nationwide. Mississippi's ITS licenses have more complete coverage than any state in the country, while Mississippi has the greatest distance to travel to bridge the digital divide. As stated in the Governor's report "Creating Economic Prosperity for a New Century," Mississippi intends to fully utilize these ITS licenses to provide available, affordable Internet access in rural areas to both small business and to homes. ITS licensees are therefore serving the educational community as they help the nation and the Commission to bridge the Digital Divide.

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Chairman Michael K. Powell

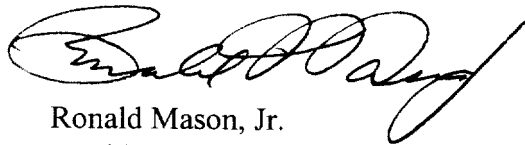
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If the Commission reallocates any part of the ITS spectrum for 3G mobile device services, the capacity, usefulness, and value of ITS would be significantly diminished. Even if only part of the spectrum is taken away, many educational institutions would lose their ITS service altogether, while others would face new equipment costs, service disruption and cutbacks, lower quality of service and signal interference. In either scenario, the ITS community would be incapable of supporting advanced wireless services and promoting the development of broadband services to the educational community and to underserved communities nationwide.

If the ITS spectrum is compromised in any way, these public benefits will be lost. We hope that you will support us in maintaining the integrity of the spectrum and in keeping this tremendous educational resource alive and strong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Mason, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Ronald Mason, Jr.
President